

VZCZCXRO3475  
OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM  
DE RUEHML #2425/01 3240613  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 200613Z NOV 09  
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5840  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 002425

SIPDIS  
STATE FOR EAP/RSP AND G/TIP

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KTIP](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [KWMN](#) [KCRM](#) [RP](#)  
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINES TIP INTERIM ASSESSMENT

REF: A. STATE 111958 (INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERIM ASSESSMENT)  
[1](#)B. MANILA 2272 (PHILIPPINES' FIRST TIP CONVICTION OF A PUBLIC OFFICIAL)

[1](#)1. SUMMARY: In response to the Ref A request, this message provides information on the Philippines for the Interim Assessment of the Special Watch List countries. There were three new TIP convictions, and Philippine government agencies are taking actions to stem the numbers of people being trafficked for labor. Some law enforcement agencies are becoming more aggressive in pursuing TIP cases. The Bureau of Immigration is implementing a new initiative to inform international travelers of the risks of engaging in unlawful behavior, including TIP. Resource shortages continue to hamper the government's ability to train its officials, and the Philippine Congress did not allocate funding to the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in the most recent budget cycle. Nonetheless, government actors overall are showing new, concerted efforts to fight human trafficking. END SUMMARY.

#### THREE NEW TIP CONVICTIONS

-----

[1](#)2. Philippine prosecutors and NGO lawyers are making progress in prosecuting human traffickers, as highlighted by two recent court verdicts convicting three individuals of human trafficking. A Manila Regional Trial Court on September 30 convicted former police officer Dennis Reci and his accomplice for trafficking minors in 2005 (Ref B). This conviction is the first known conviction of a public official for a TIP-related offense in the Philippines. On October 29, a trafficker was convicted and sentenced to over 30 years in prison for three counts of sexual abuse and violation of the anti-TIP law for recruiting minors for commercial sex. The convictions in these two cases were a result of cases filed and prosecuted by NGO International Justice Mission (IJM) on behalf of the victims.

#### SEEKING PROSECUTIONS, ADDRESSING LABOR TIP

-----

[1](#)3. Philippine authorities continue to pursue human traffickers under anti-TIP and related laws. From January to July, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) investigated 140 new alleged trafficking cases, of which 48 were recommended for prosecution. From January to October, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) filed 154 administrative cases against licensed labor recruiters and began investigations into their allegedly deceptive practices. In June, the Department of Justice implemented a new interagency case tracking system that will provide more complete data on nationwide anti-trafficking prosecutions. To address labor trafficking, the Bureau of Immigration at the Manila and Clark international airports in the first 10 months of the year offloaded 7,880 passengers who were not properly documented and believed to be at risk for illegal recruitment and trafficking. This figure represents a nine-fold increase from full-year 2008 off-loading data.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT BECOMING MORE AGGRESSIVE

-----

[1](#)4. Investigators at the Philippine Bureau of Immigration are

increasingly cooperative with U.S. law enforcement agencies on transnational human trafficking investigations. Other segments of the Philippine law enforcement community are showing an improved capability to act independently on intelligence to catch human traffickers. IJM Cebu reported three successful operations by police agencies in the cities of Mandaue and Lapu Lapu near Cebu City during the month of October.

-- An October 10 entrapment operation at a Mandaue City karaoke parlor by the Regional Anti-Trafficking Task Force (RAT-F) of the Police Regional Office (PRO 7) led to the rescue of 25 women, including at least six confirmed minors. The Mandaue City prosecutor's office filed trafficking charges against six perpetrators, including two Korean nationals. A pre-trial hearing is scheduled for February 9. The minors are now under the custody of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

-- An October 23 police operation against a Lapu Lapu City karaoke establishment resulted in the arrest of five perpetrators and the rescue of 25 women and girls, including six confirmed minors. On October 26, the RAT-F filed a qualified trafficking in persons case against the perpetrators before the Lapu Lapu City Prosecutor's Office. The minors are now under the custody of DSWD.

-- Following a successful October 27 entrapment operation against a female pimp, four adult females and five minors who were sold to customers in Mandaue City -- including the pimp's own daughter -- are now under the care of DSWD. The case is being assigned to a Regional Trial Court. The minors are now under the custody of DSWD.

#### NEW AND ONGOING ANTI-TIP AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

MANILA 00002425 002 OF 002

-----  
15. In order to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts in the Philippines, and in response to the urging of a U.S.-funded NGO, the Bureau of Immigration in June 2009 introduced a warning message against human trafficking, abuse and exploitation of women and children, and drug trafficking in airport immigration arrival/departure forms used by thousands of international passengers everyday. The POEA conducted Anti-Illegal Recruitment and Trafficking in Persons campaign seminars in seven cities with more than a thousand participants from local governments, media, and civil society groups.

#### RESOURCE SHORTAGES AFFECT TRAINING

-----

16. The Philippines continues to encourage its law enforcement officials to attend anti-TIP training programs. With the government's own resources severely limited, it relied on training provided by U.S. government agencies, other foreign donors, and internationally-funded NGOs such as IJM and the Visayan Forum Foundation to educate Philippine law enforcement officers and prosecutors. Since January 2009, IJM has trained approximately 575 police officers on investigation techniques and the use of the anti-trafficking law. During the same period, it also trained 62 labor inspectors and sheriffs nationwide on the effective enforcement of the 2003 law. The Philippine government did not allocate an FY2010 budget for the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), which continues to rely heavily on funding from foreign governments and donations from Philippine non-governmental organizations and corporations.

KENNEY